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U. S. Department of Agriculture
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Washington, D. C.
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CONTRIBUTIONS OF AGRICULTURE TO OUR ECONOMY //

It is a great privilege to participate in this lecture series on the Centennial celebration of the Department of Agriculture. For me it is an especially sobering experience when I realize that my first contact with the Department of Agriculture was some forty-six or forty-seven years ago -- almost half of this century of service by the Department which we are celebrating. I was one of those fortunate farm youngsters who benefitted from contacts with the first county farm agent to come to our county in Kentucky. Even at a rather early age, I found a very practical project for testing seed corn both challenging and educational. Out of such contacts grew my determination to go to the College of Agriculture and hopefully to become a county farm agent.

It was also my privilege to be a student of the Graduate School of the Department for a brief time in the 1920's. My first job off the farm was with the Department at eighty dollars per month, and, in retrospect I have always felt that I was overpaid.

From a great variety of contacts with farmers during most of this century, with the Department, and our land grant colleges, I have the highest regard for the almost unbelievable progress of our agriculture, for its contribution to our economy, and for the vital role which the Department and related institutions have played in making possible these great achievements. I am especially pleased, therefore, to have the opportunity to discuss with you the "Contributions of Agriculture to Our Economy," although I do not feel competent to do full justice to this important subject.

Economic growth has become, and continues to be, a focal issue on both sides of a severely divided world. Not only has the relative and absolute growth of the major countries become a dominant issue, but the growth of underdeveloped areas throughout the world is commanding serious attention, as well. A review of the contributions of agriculture to the growth of our own economy should be helpful to give us a better appreciation of agriculture and a better understanding of the interdependence of the several sectors of our economy. In addition, it may give us some appreciation for the role of agriculture in the growth of underdeveloped countries. What likely is more important, it may increase our awareness of the important conditions under which agriculture can make significant contributions to the growth of these newer countries.

Let me make one side comment that will, perhaps, reveal some of my biases, and then I can return to what I think is the major topic. Although we are here concerned primarily with contributions of agriculture to the economic growth of our nation, there have been important political, cultural and spiritual contributions as well. These are impossible to measure, and difficult to discuss. So I will make only an occasional passing remark concerning them.

The Setting

The contributions of American agriculture have been greatly affected by its setting over 100 years ago. First in our minds, I suspect, is our resources. Much emphasis has been placed on the abundance of America's natural resources -- our fertile lands, our oil and mineral deposits and our rivers. And it is true that they were and are abundant.

In the office of the Kern County Land Company there hangs a sign, which reads, "No steer fatteneth so well as the one which scratches it's back on

an oil derrick." This sign symbolizes the fact that, for a nation as well as for a private firm, the presence of exploitable valuable resources can greatly enhance economic growth.

But there have been other countries with fertile lands and with rich oil and mineral deposits and many of these have not experienced similar economic growth. In my opinion the uniqueness of our natural resources -- great as they are -- have been overstressed as factors leading to our economic growth.

More important, to my thinking, has been our heritage of attitudes and the emerging institutions. At the time our nation was born there were strong non-economic as well as economic ties with the center of the industrial revolution that was beginning in Europe and in England, particularly. These ties had a vital influence on the ideas and attitudes of early Americans. Notwithstanding these close ties, the colonies obtained early political freedom which freed American development from the restraints on industrialization imposed by other nations on many colonies. This delicate balance of influence without domination and control materially altered the attitude toward change and permitted an early development of industry.

As our nation developed, there were amazingly few social restraints on industry imposed by either politics or religion -- i.e., both placed a premium on hard work, savings and economic progress. Coupled with this "Work and Saving" complex was our unique land tenure system. Although we had an abundance of land, the system of huge land grants to private persons to develop and operate under a feudal or landlord system was practiced in very few cases in the United States. The dominant pattern of land development was fee-simple title to relatively small blocks of land for individual farm families. The early American

attitude toward land found its most significant expression in the Homestead Act. Although the small tracts distributed under this Act were later to prove to be inadequate, this early land policy accomplished a most significant feat: viz, it established a land tenure pattern wherein the rewards of superior management generally are directly associated with the effort, skill, and willingness to take risks.

Another important facet of our early setting was our emergence into world commerce. Even though our independence was won by war, and our emerging nation had to nurture its industries from infancy, there soon developed a relative absence of restraints between this country and the leading industrial areas. Thus, there was a close exchange of ideas, a ready market for our emerging commercial agriculture and a flow of capital into America.

I'm not sure just how to evaluate this next and final point concerning our early attitudes and setting. The founding fathers were idealists, and men of great vision who formed lofty concepts. Sometimes these concepts have had to be compromised just a bit in practice. For example, the preamble of the constitution which states that all men are created equal and which established equality in the real world as a goal was acknowledged most in terms of "equality of opportunity." The political process soon became the tool by which attempts were made to establish equality of opportunity. This procedure is still going on - and is a part of our dynamic process.

Agriculture's contributions to growth

Even in early colonial times, a commercial agriculture arose as the center of economic activity of most communities and colonies in America.

Our agriculture was established by people who had to learn to grow new crops and old crops in new environments. The process of resolving these problems

tended to keep our early farmers restlessly on the move seeking new ways of doing things, new crops, new lands, new and better machines, and new markets -- seeking always to be a part of the community of trade.

In some countries, it is still possible to describe the economic activity and business community and hardly mention the farm unit because farming presently is more a traditional way of life than an economic activity. This has never been the case in America. Here, agriculture is, and has always been, a vital industry in our business community and the family farm has been and is the primary business unit of agriculture.

An important argument in my paper is that this early development of commercial agriculture gave birth to our industrial development - that it supplied the critical resources and skills for industry and created the initial purchasing power and demand for industrial products. In countries where commercial agriculture has not developed, capital accumulation is very low, labor productivity is low, the demand for industrial products is very limited and industrialization has lagged.

Let us look at these contributions in more detail, and to do so we must consider them one by one, although, in fact, they are always used together in various combinations.

A. Human Resources

Without question the most essential and creative primary factor of production on which the capacity and growth of a nation depends is its human resource - the size, rate of growth, age composition, health, education and skills, and the motivation of its people.

At the turn of the 19th century, as our nation was beginning, approximately 90 per cent of our working population was in agriculture.

By 1860 this figure had been reduced to 60 per cent, although in absolute terms the number of workers in agriculture continued to increase until 1910 - reaching a peak of 11.6 million. The number had dropped to 9.5 million by 1940 and in 1960 was reported at 5.7 million - a decrease of 40 per cent in the last 20 years.

A rapidly expanding agriculture in the early years of our nation, was possible only with a rapidly expanding farm population. And from the time colonization began until about three quarters of the way through the 19th century, more new people moved into American agriculture - either from overseas or from urban areas in this country - than moved out. Even in this early period, however, commercial agriculture was serving as a training ground for entrepreneurial enterprise - supplying our budding industrial revolution with leadership trained in commercial enterprise and economic rationality. The attitudes and talents which these people took with them were vital to the early growth of industry.

In its early stages of development American agriculture tended to be land intensive - i.e., it substituted land for labor and capital wherever possible. As a consequence, many people, both historians and conservationists, have accused these pioneers of exploiting and plundering our land resources to the aggrandizement of their generation and the peril of the future. Given the scarcity of labor and capital and the abundance of land, it seems to me in the main these early settlers and farmers made the appropriate choices. The result was an increasingly productive agriculture that, with an ever

decreasing proportion of its workers supplied a rapidly expanding population. The workers thus released were quickly attracted into a growing industry.

Some 6 million people moved out of agriculture during the nineteen-twenties, during which time agriculture was experiencing a post-war recession and the remainder of the economy was in apparent prosperity. The movement slowed down to slightly more than 3.5 million during the thirties owing to the loss of economic opportunity off the farm. With the recovery from the great depression, and augmented by a war, migration from the farm increased to 9 million during the forties, - for a reduction of 31 per cent in rural-farm population due to migration. During the fifties another 9 million persons moved to urban areas.

Even within each decade, however, the rate of off-farm migration has been highly sensitive to changes in the rate of unemployment in the economy. Whenever this latter figure exceeded 4 1/2 to 5 per cent, outmigration from agriculture slowed down materially.

The dominant force moving people off the farm and into industry is the attraction of greater economic opportunity - the claims of the political party not in power at any given moment to the contrary notwithstanding. One should not conclude that only marginal people move out. Many of proven management ability have been attracted by better opportunities in industry and commerce. In addition, a large number of well trained and, in some cases, highly educated farm youth have moved into industry or professional service in urban areas. More

than one-half of the farm population age 10-19 in 1940 had left the farm by 1950, compared to 40 per cent for those age 20-24. Less than 20 per cent of those 30-49 years old in 1940 had moved from the farm by 1950. Clearly, those moving out of agriculture were in the prime of their working years. Without this vast movement of labor out of agriculture -- both unskilled and trained, -- industry could not have expanded as it did. Most of the capital required to educate and train this labor supply originated within agriculture and constitutes a notable contribution of agriculture to the economic growth of our nation.

Improving the human resources

Just a little over a century ago a frontier politician by the name of Abraham Lincoln campaigned for the Presidency on a platform of agrarian reform, among other things. Because the Southern States seceded on his taking office, the control of government passed, suddenly, from plantation agriculture to business. And whereas during the first 75 years the political dominance of agriculture left no clear felt need for a special department in Washington, suddenly the need was felt keenly. Lincoln quickly signed three bills designed to help agriculture. 1) The bill creating the U. S. Department of Agriculture, 2) The Morrill, or Land Grant College Act and 3) The Homestead Act.

It was the latter that received the greatest attention at the time, but it was the first two that were to have the greatest long term impact on agriculture. Not even Lincoln could imagine how far-reaching they would be. The law establishing the Department of Agriculture described its primary function "to acquire and diffuse among the people

of the United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture in the most general and comprehensive sense of the word."

The Hatch Act in 1887 established an Experiment Station for each Land Grant college and set up funds and guidelines for research designed to make farmers more efficient. In 1914 the Smith-Lever Act established the Federal-State Extension Service, thus completing the three-cornered program of teaching, research, and extension by the Land Grant Colleges.

The establishment of the USDA and the Land Grant college system was an attempt to improve the opportunities for rural people. Prior to that time, only the relatively wealthy normally attended universities. The new program meant that the opportunity for a college education would be available to just about everyone who wanted it and who was otherwise determined to get it. Furthermore, it elevated the study of agriculture and the mechanical arts to the university level.

Although in actual dollars it doesn't bulk very large, relative to the cost of other factors, the most significant inputs that were made in American agriculture, I believe, are those spent in the establishment of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Land Grant College System, and their subsequent programs of research and education. In few, if any, other ventures has the marginal productivity of capital been so great.

The products have been of several types. First, the new discoveries - new improved varieties, hybrid seeds, balanced fertilizers, new machines, chemicals for disease, weed and insect control, and

growth hormones - have combined to supply our nation with the greatest abundance and variety of wholesome food that any nation has ever experienced. Second, the educational programs have equipped many of our outstanding farm youth with professional skills with which they have gone on to make outstanding contributions to society - both rural and urban. And third, I think it neither trite, nor does it smack of agricultural fundamentalism, to state my belief that the farm youth programs of 4-H and FFA, combined with a vigorous exposure to commercial enterprise on the farm, has done much to equip our farm youth to be of service both in and out of agriculture.

The combined programs in research and education of USDA and the Land Grant College have opened up new opportunities for capital.

Agriculture as a User of Capital

The balance Sheet of Agriculture lists the total physical assets of agriculture at a current value of over \$206 billion. This is impressive, and if it all represented capital that had been saved out of production and allocated to agriculture at the expense of investment elsewhere one could conclude, justifiably, that our agricultural growth had occurred at the expense of industrial growth. Obviously this isn't what the figures represent. In constant prices (using 1910-14 as a base) nearly three-fourths of the value of agriculture's physical assets has been in land over the years. And, in an aggregate sense, the opportunity cost of this land to agriculture is near zero. That is, most farm land isn't a resource that can be used for other purposes than agriculture. Surprisingly, this percentage figure changed very little

between 1860 and 1940, although there has been a tendency for it to decline in the last 20 years.

In order to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding domestic population plus a growing foreign demand, American agriculture underwent early rapid expansion. Some new machinery, buildings and equipment were needed, of course, but this early expansion of output depended heavily on new land development, and less on resources that were needed for expanding industrial development.

This is a highly significant factor, since even as late as 1860 agriculture comprised almost half of our gross national product. If, in those early years, agriculture had competed more directly and more heavily with industry for scarce labor and capital, it could have contributed much less to our industrial development than it did.

The period of heavy investment in agriculture of resources with a high opportunity cost began with the adaptation of the internal combustion engine about 1914. Computed in constant prices, the heaviest expansion in farm machinery and equipment occurred between 1915-20, and then again beginning in 1940, after our nation had achieved the status of the leading capitalist nation. The value of machinery and equipment on our farms (in constant dollars) has increased nearly 140 per cent since 1940.

At the peak of animal draft power in the 1920's there were some 15 million horsepower equivalents on our farms. Today we have an estimated 15 million tractors, trucks, cars and combines on about half as many farms as we had in 1920. A recent estimate listed the mechanical power equipment on our farms at 115.6 million horsepower, all railroads at 88.7, and all factories at 28.2 million.

Thus, although agriculture today is a heavy user of capital, the historical pattern of use is one which allowed for a maximum of industrial growth during the period of early and rapid expansion of our economy.

Agriculture as a producer of capital

The abundance of land distributed to large numbers of people on a fee simple basis helped establish a favorable attitude toward labor-saving innovations; i. e., the marginal productivity of capital invested in such improvements was very high. This, in turn, provided an incentive for a high rate of saving and capital formation. In fact, the power of agriculture to save has been nothing short of phenomenal. (In some areas, at times the propensity for saving has been almost pathological - i. e., at the sacrifice of the health, education and welfare of the farm family.)

In addition to the savings which successful commercial farmers accumulated - parts of which were invested in building industries, our commercial agriculture earned valuable foreign exchange. Our close link with the emerging industrial areas of Europe provided a ready market for a number of farm products, including wheat, tobacco, hides, wool, and cotton. These were exchanged for capital goods of many kinds so vitally needed for industrial development here at home.

Furthermore, a commercial and expanding agriculture became the economic base, in most areas, that attracted vast quantities of foreign capital into this country. Not to be overlooked, also, is the fact that agriculture supplied the bulk of reserves required to operate the Government including its investment and development activities as well as its operation in those earlier years.

Aside from the dollars and foreign exchange which agriculture produced for its own expansion and the early development of industry, it contributed materially to the productivity of our labor force. Mentioned already is the influence which commercial agriculture and the farm youth programs made on the motivation and skills of the young people moving out of agriculture and into industry. Important, also, has been, and is, the contribution of an adequate diet. In countries where people are inadequately fed, labor is relatively unproductive. Without question, agriculture made one of its greatest contributions to the growth of the American economy by keeping our people well fed and strong.

Agriculture as a market for industrial products

At the same time that agriculture was supplying capital and labor to a budding industry, it also comprised an important market for industrial products at a time when many of these industries could not yet compete on a world market. In turn, an efficient industrial economy has made possible the dynamic agriculture of the last generation, when there occurred - and its still going on - a veritable technological revolution in agriculture.

Practically all the power used on today's farms, as well as the fuel, fertilizer and building materials; all the chemicals for weed disease and pest control; much of the feeds and most of the foods are supplied from off the farm. It has been estimated that industry now supplies farmers with commercial inputs at an annual rate of about \$18 billion. As a consequence of these inputs, combined with a continuous upgrading of the human resources in agriculture, output per man hour has increased by about 240 per cent since the mid thirties

Agriculture's Dependence on Industry

Clearly, both industry and agriculture have come to depend heavily on one another. Whenever agriculture experiences an economic setback industry experiences a slackening in the demand for many of its products. Similarly, when there is a slack in total employment in industry the demand for many farm products falls.

Agriculture today has little choice but to be a vital part of the business and industrial community. Reflect for a moment what would happen to our farms if, for example, our oil refining and distributing system were suddenly immobilized. Practically all of agriculture would soon come to a standstill.

One sees some startling paradoxes when comparing our agriculture with that of our arch-rival in this global conflict -- Russia. On the one hand, our farms are highly capitalized, mechanized and productive -- to where one person in agriculture can produce enough food and fiber to sustain about 25 persons, and farm prices are burdened by food surpluses. At the same time our national policy is one of subsidizing farm income and farm exports and thus attracting more capital into agriculture.

On the other hand, a Russian farmer, with little capital and few machines or tools, produces enough for only himself and four others. Even so, Soviet rulers squeeze capital out of agriculture in order to invest it in publicly-owned industry. Nevertheless, it is true that a war that would destroy the factories and refineries of the world would be more devastating to our agriculture than to theirs. We could not get the draft animals to empower our machines -- our supply of hoes and mattocks would be woefully inadequate.

Who has benefited from increased agricultural productivity?

More than in any other field, new technological developments in

agriculture are the result of research and educational activities by the Land Grant University system and a branch of the Federal Government. Funds were appropriated by state and federal government representatives primarily for the stated purpose of improving the economic condition of farmers.

The early adapters of new farm production techniques reaped benefits, of course, because the new techniques lowered unit cost of production. Similarly, some of the benefits were distributed, at times, to the more progressive distributors who adapt quickly to new developments. However, as other farmers and distributors followed the leaders in adapting the new practices, the cost curve to the industry shifted downward and the supply curve for farm products shifted to the right. As a consequence, farm prices declined to where the increased output often sold for less than the original and smaller supply.

Under these circumstances farm incomes have, at times, been lowered by the programs designed to raise them. However, society has vastly benefited by having a more abundant and cheaper food supply. In no other nation do industrial workers have to labor so few hours to supply the food needs of their families.

Economic Growth and Agricultural Adjustment

The process of economic growth has required substantial changes in both the quality and combinations of productive resources. Capital in a multitude of forms has been substituted for labor in farm production, leaving a reservoir of unused or only partly used labor in rural areas.

Agriculture now demands higher training and performance from its managers and most of its labor than was needed formerly. Farm mechanization and chemistry has altered the economic potential of different lands. Favored by this change are large tracts of lands that can be leveled or that lend themselves to mechanization or irrigation. Seriously penalized are the small plots of hilly land.

The level of native fertility which 100 years ago was the primary quality consideration of land - is of considerably less relative importance today.

So that while the benefits of agricultural progress are quite generally distributed among our society of consumers in the form of lower prices for food and fiber, the burdens of this progress has fallen largely on agriculture. Even within agriculture the weight of the burden is distributed differently among geographic regions, depending on topography, among commodities depending largely on the elasticities of supply and demand, and among farm people depending on their ability to adjust to the changes. These burdens hang heavily in some areas and with some rural people.

Some problems to be Resolved

If we are to achieve the fullest benefits of agricultural progress for farmers and the economy as a whole both for now and for the future, there are a number of unresolved questions the answers to which we must pursue - three of which, I believe, are especially germane to the present topic.

First. Conservation of natural resources. We are becoming keenly aware that many of our natural resources are not unlimited in terms of the prospective long-term ideological conflicts that confront our nation, It is important that we learn how to use these scarce resources so that the future use-rates are not impaired. This does not mean that we refrain from using them now in favor of some remotely anticipated period. Rather, we need to learn how to use them - how to combine them with capital in some form - so that their continued use will be made possible.

Second We must speed the adjustments in human resources in those less advantaged areas that largely have been by-passed by economic progress. Many of these people are carrying the burden of the needed adjustment arising out of the economic growth

which agriculture has experienced during the last generation.

The solution to this problem is important not only to ourselves in terms of lost economic activity and human suffering here and now. It has longer run connotations. If investment in research and education lead to more rapid changes and these changes and new developments continue to leave people stranded in agriculture, one answer is to reduce these original expenditures and cease to aggravate the problem. The long-run consequences of this decision make such action untenable in the present world circumstances.

Clearly, the solution lies in getting these people gainfully employed outside agriculture. Unfortunately, this is a difficult solution. Many of them have limited skills outside agriculture and haven't a sufficient number of productive years left to cause them to undertake the expense of developing new skills, and moving to new locations. Under the burden of family responsibility, they hesitate to uproot themselves and move to a large and strange city under conditions of high job uncertainty.

Despite the pains of adjustments, people have been moving out of agriculture at a rapid pace in recent years. In fact, from a sociological standpoint, they likely have been moving into Chicago, Detroit, New York, and a number of other industrial cities faster than they are being assimilated. Some serious and very difficult problems of assimilation of many of the people who have moved from farm to city exist.

If we are to achieve the full benefit of continued agricultural progress we must face the serious problem of social acculturation and economic reorientation of those human resources that have become surplus in agriculture. The first necessary condition for making the adjustment is that the chance for job

opportunity be high. The record is clear on this point. In periods of high unemployment, outmigration from agriculture slows down. In addition, an overt program in education, job training, and social acculturation is needed. The problem cannot be solved without it.

The third problem I want to mention is not unrelated to the second, but it is a broader problem. And I admit that I might be on shaky ground so far as short-run economic efficiency is concerned. But by introspection and intuition I feel I am on solid philisophic and moral ground.

The more I commute between and within our large metropolitan centers the more dissatisfied I become with what we are bringing forth. It is my deep conviction that this kind of social organization fails to establish the environment in which man can achieve his worthiest ambitions in life. We have not yet began to face the problems that such sprawling metropolitan areas and the resulting social structures are creating.

In my opinion, we need to devote a great deal more attention to ways and means of achieving a more meaningful geographic dispersion of industry.

Distributing non-farm opportunities more evenly throughout agricultural areas will go far in solving the surplus labor problem in agriculture. In addition, it will help reduce some of the serious problems I feel we will some day face if our huge metropolitan areas continue to expand as they have done in the last 20 years.

Summary

Because American agriculture developed on a commercial basis rather than in the traditional feudalistic, peasant, subsistence pattern of most other areas at the time, it made possible our early industrial development. First, it supplied an important part of the capital, the management, and the labor required by early industry; and second, it supplied a strong demand for the products of industry. From its beginning, American agriculture has been a vital part of the business community and today is highly dependent on industry.

Few, if any, investments in our history have yielded so high returns as the dollars invested in agricultural research and teaching. They made possible the technological revolution in agriculture that has increased productivity per hour by 240 per cent in the last 25 years. The benefits of these gains have been universally spread among all our citizens in the form of very low food prices in relation to nonfarm incomes. The burden of the tremendous changes brought about by these developments have fallen very unevenly, however, to the distress of some rural areas and rural peoples.

Thus, economic problems of large numbers of farmers are very real. There are many farm problems just as there are many adjustment problems in other sectors of our economy. But the most serious over-all problem is that related to the adjustment of people in agriculture. This problem is the unresolved portion of the adjustment process inherent in economic growth and progress--the objective for which we are striving so hard. One should hasten to add that these problems are not limited to agriculture. As pointed out by Dr. Schultz recently--"Producer losses from economic progress are accumulative -- they continue to mount and burden particular occupations and areas over long periods

of time." Examples other than agriculture are found in the experience of northern textiles and especially in coal mining.

Viewed in proper perspective, our agriculture has proven to be quite flexible in response to the economic and other forces which have influenced its development during the past century. Some of the adjustments have been forced by the cruel processes of economic attrition. Other adjustments have been in response to opportunities growing out of the application of the results of scientific research to farming or out of the development of new or expanding markets, including a very great improvement in the diet of all the people in this favored land.

The adjustments growing out of the shift away from horse and mule power in the last four decades has been phenomenal in both character and magnitude. In the process, for example, our Northeastern farmers lost their market for timothy hay which used to be consumed in huge quantities by the horses in our Eastern cities. Unaided by price supports, acreage allotments or marketing quotas, this adjustment had to be met by shifts to more profitable enterprises -- on and off the farm. One could point to countless other examples of adjustment problems growing out of dynamic change, progress, and growth.

Growth in a dynamic economy cannot be as balanced and uniform as in a living organism. We must expect that some phases will get out of kilter at times. And when important segments lag behind as much as has selected parts of agriculture, help is needed. However, in providing this help we must not circumscribe agriculture so that farmers cannot continue to make adjustments of their own. In providing this help we should try always to avoid types of action which will tend merely to postpone, prolong, transfer or perhaps even intensify the eventual adjustments which are in keeping with continued agricultural progress.

My point is that agriculture has made its greatest progress on the basis of relative freedom to adjust and ability to adjust to changing circumstances. We must be careful not to freeze agriculture into patterns of control which would prevent agriculture from 1) making the necessary adjustments to new developments and opportunities, and 2) making its greatest contribution to the continued growth of the economy as a whole. I strongly feel that the first point is a necessary condition for the second.

Let me close on this positive point; We can all be proud of our great agricultural industry, and the part that you in the USDA, in the Land Grant Universities and in related industries have played in making it so productive and so dynamic. Agriculture can be proud of its great contribution to the growth and welfare of our people. As a nation we are greatly blessed to have the most dynamic, best managed and most productive agriculture in the world. And it seems to me we all have much at stake in seeing that we keep it that way.



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